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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, April 3

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

09:59

Met with LDP Research Commission on Foreign Affairs Chair Yamasaki and others at Kantei.

10:43

Met with Parliamentary Defense Secretary Terada and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yanagisawa.

11:01

Met with National Police Agency Traffic Bureau Director-General Suei. After him, met with Ambassador to International Organizations

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in Geneva Kitajima.

12:24

Met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Futahashi.

13:34

Met with Cabinet Special Advisor Okuda.

14:27

Met with State Minister in Charge of Science and Technology Policy, Atomic Energy Committee Chair Kondo and others.

15:25

Met with Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications Masuda.

16:03

Met with MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Saiki.

17:00

Met with House of Councilors member Otsuji.

18:04

Attended a session of the People's Livelihood Council.

18:45

Arrived at Kantei residence.

4) U.S. seaman arrested for murdering taxi driver; Suspect transferred from U.S. military to prefectural police

ASAHI (Top play) (Excerpts)
April 4, 2008

Kanagawa prefectural police arrested yesterday Olatunbosun Ugbogu, 22, a U.S. seaman apprentice (itto suihei) of Nigerian nationality based at Yokosuka Naval Base, on suspicion of robbing and murdering a taxi driver in Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture. Ugbogu has reportedly admitted to the charges against him.

At the same time, according to a lawyer who met Ugbogu last night, the seaman denied criminal intent, saying: "I didn't mean to kill him. I didn't mean to bilk him."

The U.S. side agreed to hand Ugbogu over during a Japan-U.S. Joint Committee meeting held yesterday afternoon. The prefectural police executed an arrest warrant for Ugbogu after he was transferred from the base to the Yokosuka Police Station. This is the fifth pre-indictment case since 1995.

The case will proceed under the Japanese legal system. At the same time, in the event a U.S. serviceman suspected to have committed a heinous crime, such as murder, is handed over to Japan before

indictment, the presence of a person representing the U.S. military command is allowed. For this reason, a U.S. Navy legal officer will be present at Ugboqu's questioning.

5) Kanagawa police arrest U.S. sailor on suspicion of robbery and murder, making it fifth pre-indictment case

MAINICHI (Top play) (Lead paragraph)
April 4, 2008

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Kanagawa prefectural police arrested yesterday Olatunbosun Ugboqu, a 22-year old U.S. seaman apprentice (itto suihei) of Nigerian nationality, on suspicion of murdering and robbing Masaaki Takahashi, a 61-year old taxi driver of Shinagawa Ward, Tokyo, in Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture. Ugboqu, a crew member of the Aegis-equipped cruiser USS Cowpens, has been detained by the U.S. Navy. The prefectural police will analyze his motive, suspecting that the crime might have resulted from a taxi fare conflict from the fact that his credit card found in the taxicab had been unusable.

6) Foreign Minister Koumura asks U.S. Ambassador to take thorough preventive measures

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Full)
April 4, 2008

Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura yesterday called U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer to his ministry and requested that the U.S. take thorough measures to prevent heinous crimes from occurring. In response, Ambassador Schieffer said: "We are truly sorry for this tragic incident. We will do everything we can." The two leaders also agreed on the need to provide information on U.S. deserters to Japan. The two sides are expected to reach an agreement soon on a concrete communication system.

Ambassador Schieffer also called on Kanagawa Governor Shigefumi Matsuzawa yesterday evening to offer an apology. In the session, the governor asked the Ambassador to establish a special committee so that base-hosting municipalities can take part in the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee. In response, Ambassador Schieffer said, "We have an obligation to seriously consider the governor's proposal."

7) Arrest of U.S. seaman: Foreign Minister Koumura calls on U.S. to enforce strict discipline; U.S. Ambassador to Japan Schieffer says, "It's extremely regrettable"

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura yesterday called U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer to his ministry in connection with the murder of a taxi driver in Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture. Speaking of the suspect U.S. serviceman, Koumura asked Schieffer: "The Japanese police have called for the transfer of the suspect before his indictment. It is my hope that you will do so immediately."

Koumura also asked Ambassador Schieffer to enforce strict discipline among the U.S. military personnel and take measures to prevent a recurrence.

In response, Ambassador Schieffer apologized, "I deeply regret this incident and apologize for it. I offer my heartfelt and deep condolences to the victim and his family." He agreed to hand the suspect over to the Japanese side. He also promised full cooperation with the investigation and utmost efforts to enforce strict discipline and take measures to prevent a recurrence.

The Japanese side also called for the transfer of the suspect at the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee held to obtain approval from each

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committee component. The U.S. side accepted the Japanese side's request.

Emerging from the meeting, Ambassador Schieffer told the press corps, "The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) process has worked very well this time," and emphasized that there was no need to revise SOFA."

Late yesterday Prime Minister Fukuda, speaking of SOFA, told reporters, "I'll improve the current arrangements step by step in a steady manner," and reiterated it would be possible to deal with the situation by improving the operations of (SOFA).

8) Kanagawa Governor Matsuzawa asks for participation of local government representatives in Japan-U.S. Joint Committee

NIKKEI (Page 35) (Full)
April 4, 2008

U.S. Ambassador to Japan Schieffer on April 3 visited the Kanagawa Prefectural Office to offer an apology for the recent taxi murder case. Kanagawa Prefectural Governor Matsuzawa during the meeting noted, "I would like to see a venue for discussing ways to prevent crimes and accidents caused by U.S. servicemen established." He thus called for the establishment within the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee of a special regional committee in which representatives of local governments that host U.S. military bases can take part.

9) U.S. sailor arrested over murder of taxi driver: Yokohama mayor condemns incident, urges U.S. to seriously reflect on incident

ASAHI (Page 31) (Excerpts)
April 4, 2008

A U.S. Navy seaman was arrested over the murder of a taxi driver in Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture. Yokosuka City's efforts to create a safe town in cooperation with the U.S. military were dubbed the "Yokosuka model." The heinous crime this time has disappointed its citizens. The U.S. Ambassador to Japan visited the city to offer an apology and repeatedly noted his determination to make efforts to prevent any recurrence. However, local residents are furious.

The incident has greatly disappointed Yokosuka City, where the murder took place.

U.S. Ambassador Schieffer, the commander of the U.S. Navy 7th Fleet, and the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Japan visited the Yokosuka municipal office. Ambassador Schieffer offered an apology: "The incident has caused much trouble to citizens of the local community. We are going to try to take measures as much as we can in order to prevent any recurrence." Mayor Ryoichi Kabaya told them, "It is regrettable that a U.S. service member committed such a brutal crime. I hope you will seriously reflect on it."

Ambassador Schieffer then returned to Tokyo and met with Foreign Minister Koumura. During a meeting with Koumura, he offered an apology to the family and friends of Masaki Takahashi (61), the victim of the incident. He then again went to Kanagawa Prefecture in the evening and offered an apology to Kanagawa Prefectural Governor Matsuzawa.

Responding to a question asked by reporters at the Foreign Ministry,

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Ambassador Schieffer said, "Japan and the U.S. have fully cooperated with each other in dealing with the incident this time. I believe the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) has worked very well." He thus underscored that investigations by the Japanese side have suffered no setbacks. He noted, "In my view, there is no need to revise SOFA at this juncture." Koumura also repeated his previous view that the government's position is that it wants to deal with incidents like this by improving the application of SOFA.

Mayor Kabaya during a press conference held after his meeting with Schieffer was visibly upset by the incident, "Yokosuka City was once

called a model for local governments that host U.S. military bases. It is extremely regrettable that the incident occurred despite such efforts."

10) Citizens voice distrust of U.S. service members

NIKKEI (Page 35) (Full)
April 4, 2008

The U.S. military imposed a night curfew following the slaying of a taxi driver by a U.S. serviceman. Many U.S. military personnel shoppers visit a shopping district near the U.S. Navy Yokosuka Navy Base commonly known as Dobuuta Dori. Some storekeepers are concerned about the possible impact of the measure on their business, but others expressed distrust of U.S. servicemen.

Regarding the incident, a company employee in his thirties who works near the shopping district said, "The incident drew attention, because the victim died. However, crimes caused by U.S. servicemen tend to be swept under the carpet due perhaps to the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement." He said he often witnesses U.S. service members drawing graffiti on shutters, throwing empty bottles from cars, and behaving violently in the shopping district.

He lamented, "If the curfew is lifted, they may do the same thing again."

11) Three opposition party secretaries general propose revising SOFA

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

The secretaries general of three opposition parties -- the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the People's New Party (PNP) -- met yesterday with Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura and Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura

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and presented their proposal for a revision of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement. The opposition's proposal stipulates that the U.S. side be required to hand over a service member suspected of committing a crime to the Japanese side before the suspect is indicted in accordance with the Japanese side's request. The handover of a suspect before being prosecuted is stipulated in the improved application of the SOFA, but it is entrusted to the U.S. side.

12) Opposition parties call for SOFA revision

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
April 4, 2008

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The secretaries general of three opposition parties -- Democratic Party of Japan, Social Democratic Party, and People's New Party -- yesterday presented to Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura a Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement revision plan and sought talks with the United States. The plan calls for: (1) pre-indictment handover of all suspects to Japan, (2) application of the Alien Registration Law to U.S. service members living off base and others, and (3) presentation of base use plans every eight years. Touching on the recent Yokosuka taxi driver murder case, DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama said, "The SOFA must be revised in order also to prevent such an incident." In response, Machimura said, "We would like to consider it."

13) Prime Minister Fukuda negative about revising SOFA

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

Kazuya Haniwa

The opposition parties are calling for revising the Japan-U.S.

Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), but Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda indicated his reluctance to do so, noting, "I wonder whether this kind of incident will disappear if it is revised. We must consider such a matter." Fukuda went on to say: "I will improve the (operation) of the current arrangements step by step in a steady manner."

14) Foreign Minister Koumura, U.S. Ambassador Schieffer cautious about review of SOFA

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

Referring to calls for a review of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in the wake of the murder of a taxi driver by a U.S. military serviceman in Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer said yesterday: "The SOFA functioned well since Japan and the United States fully cooperated in the investigations. So, there is no need to revise it." Foreign Ministry Masahiko Koumura also took the position of not seeking a review of the SOFA. They separately spoke to the press in the Foreign Ministry.

The Ambassador pointed out: "When the Japanese side wanted to question (the suspect), they could do so." The Foreign Minister stated: "Among the countries that host U.S. bases, Japan is the only country where the U.S. side hands over a suspect before indictment. I want to deal with matters by using the improved SOFA application."

15) "Sympathy budget" bill approved by Lower House, but cause of dispute still remains in terms of relations with U.S.

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

A bill for a new special agreement concerning Japan's host nation support for the U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) (the "sympathy budget") was adopted by a majority of votes from the ruling parties in the Lower House plenary session yesterday. The new agreement is now certain to be approved by May 3, for the Lower House's decision surpasses the

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Upper House's regarding agreements as well as budget bills under the Constitution. However, with the expiration of the old agreement, a "vacuum period" has been created. In addition, the opposition parties are gearing up to grill the government about entertainment-related outlays once debate on the agreement begins in the Upper House. All these things are likely to become another cause of dispute in relations with the United States.

The sympathy budget consists of three items: personnel expenses for workers at U.S. military facilities, utilities charges for housing, and transfer expenses regarding carrier-based aircraft and other items. The major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) argues against the inclusion in the budget of salaries of workers working at entertainment facilities in military bases.

The new agreement is to replace the old one, which expired at the end of March. The term of the new agreement is set at three years. The government intended to get the new agreement approved in the Diet by the end of March, but primarily because of the delay in starting debate on the new agreement in the Diet, a "vacuum period," a period that will not be covered by the sympathy budget, has been created.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), if the new agreement does not take effect by the end of the month, that will be a hindrance to the payment of personnel expenses for April. The DPJ is highly likely to oppose the new agreement in the Upper House, as well, but in order to avoid causing confusion, the party is unlikely to move to delay discussion on the new agreement in the Upper House. But there are some items, such as payment of utilities charges for April, that are likely to be affected; as a result, the U.S. military may be forced to pay them.

16) DPJ head Ozawa again abstains from vote in Lower House plenary session

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

The major opposition Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa yesterday abstained from voting on a new special agreement bill in the Lower House plenary session. The same day, Ozawa met with reporters in Chiba Prefecture and told them: "I did not attend because I had another appointment. I have my own priority order of events." When the MDSF refueling bill was put to a vote in the Lower House plenary session this past January, Ozawa left the plenary hall before voting in spite of voting against the bill being decided as his party's policy. Ozawa was afterwards exposed to criticism.

17) Outgoing Ambassador to U.S. Kato: Japan should display independent identity

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

(Takashi Arimoto, Washington)

Ambassador to the United States Ryozi Kato gave a press conference on the 2nd, prior to resigning from his office, in which he said: "If Japan continues to carry out appropriate policies in the three areas of economics, technology and culture, and diplomacy and

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national defense, the U.S. will continue to respect Japan at the current level."

Disclosing that he is often asked how Japan-U.S. relations are expected to change under a new president, Kato said: "No matter who becomes president, it is basically important for Japan to consider what it should do," stressing that Japan should display its independent identity.

Comparing Japan-U.S. relations to a telescope, the ambassador said: "There was a long period in which the U.S., seen from Japan, looked big, while Japan, seen from the U.S., looked far smaller than what it actually is. We are now in an age of both sides seeing each other as they really are." He indicated that Japan has made its presence felt more in the U.S., as represented by the friendly relationship established between former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and President Bush.

During his term of office, the ambassador was also pressed to play a difficult role in order to maintain the alliance with the U.S. due to the temporary suspension of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean and other issues. Remembering those days, Kato said: "I was under heavy pressure every day."

18) Extension of sanctions on North Korea to be decided on April 11 in cabinet meeting

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

The government yesterday decided on a policy of extending by six months Japan's sanctions against North Korea, which will expire April 13. The reason is that there has been no improvement on the abduction issue and that the North has not implemented the six-party agreement to produce a complete and correct declaration of its nuclear programs. The government, therefore, concluded that the public would not approve the lifting of sanctions.

In the wake of North Korea's nuclear test, Japan imposed sanctions for six months in October 2006. The extension this time around is the third. The main points of the sanctions include a ban on North Korean ships, including the freighter Man Gyon Bong, from calling at Japanese ports.

19) LDP, New Komeito secretaries general to depart for China on

April 15

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

LDP Secretary General Bunmei Ibuki and New Komeito Secretary General Kazuo Kitagawa will visit China for two days from April 15. The two are expected to meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao and Vice President Zeng Qinghong to exchange views on the row over poisoned China-made dumplings and the dispute over exploration rights in the East China Sea gas fields. They will also likely ask for China's cooperation to prevent global warming. They are expected to hand Prime Minister Fukuda's letter to the Chinese leader.

20) Government to present new nominee for BOJ governorship possibly on the 7th

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YOMIURI (Page 5) (Full)
April 4, 2008

Regarding a new nominee for the now vacant post of Bank of Japan (BOJ) governor, Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura told Democratic Party of Japan Secretary General Hatoyama in the Diet Building yesterday: "We would like to present our proposal soon. If we can make it, we want to reach a conclusion by April 11." Machimura indicated that the government would present a new nominee for the post to the Diet possibly on the 7th, keeping in mind the Group of Seven (G-7) finance officials' meeting scheduled for April 11 in Washington.

Machimura conveyed to House of Representatives Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Takashi Sasagawa his intention to propose a new nominee on April 7 or 8. In this connection, a senior Liberal Democratic Party member said: "It is necessary to have (the proposal adopted) in a (Lower House) plenary session on the 9th. I think the proposal should be submitted on the 7th at the latest." Prime Minister Fukuda told reporters at his official residence last night: "I share (Machimura's view). It is better to decide what it should be decided at an early date."

21) MSDF reform panel meets for 1st time

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

In the wake of an Aegis-equipped ship's recent fatal collision with a fishing boat and other incidents, the Maritime Self-Defense Force yesterday held the first meeting of its committee for major reform. The MSDF has set up the committee to discuss how to improve its organization and prevent incidents from recurring. The committee will work out an improvement plan in around six months.

22) SDF's top brass to visit Russia from Apr. 8

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 4, 2008

Takashi Saito, chief of the Self-Defense Forces' Joint Staff Office, told a press conference yesterday that he will visit Russia April 8-12. Saito will meet with Chief of the General Staff Baluyevsky and other Russian military leaders to exchange views on the Far Eastern and East Asian situations as well as defense exchanges. This is the first time in three years for the SDF's top brass to visit Russia. In 2005, the then SDF Joint Staff Council chairman, Hajime Massaki, visited Russia.

SCHIEFFER